

TENNESSEE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
FISCAL REVIEW COMMITTEE



FISCAL NOTE

HB 344 - SB 377

February 12, 2023

SUMMARY OF BILL: Requires a local education agency (LEA) to classify school nurses employed by the LEA as licensed personnel and to compensate school nurses according to the salary schedule adopted by the LEA for licensed personnel for the respective school year. Requires school nurses to receive the same base salary, for the respective school year, as that established for licensed teachers with a bachelor's degree and zero years of experience if the school nurse meets certain criteria. Requires an LEA to pay a school nurse more or less than the established base salary per school year depending on the nurse's level of training and experience. Prohibits an adopted salary schedule from resulting in the reduction of the salary of a school nurse employed by the LEA at the time of the adoption of the salary schedule. Applies to the 2023-2024 school year and each school year thereafter.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Other Fiscal Impact – For LEAs that are required to increase compensation for nurses, a mandatory increase in local expenditures will occur. However, due to multiple unknown variables, a precise fiscal impact cannot reasonably be determined.

Assumptions:

- The proposed legislation does not apply to contractors of the LEA.
- The Tennessee Investment in Student Achievement Act funding formula does not include components for specific positions or salary unit costs.
- LEAs will be required to review the salaries of nurses employed by the LEA to ensure that they meet the proposed salary requirements.
- The Department of Education (DOE) does not collect information on nurse salaries at LEAs.
- According to a 2019 Office of Research and Education Accountability (OREA) survey, OREA received pay scale details from 90 school districts and detailed salary information on 612 nurses from 56 districts, which determined:
 - 31 responding districts categorize nurses as certified employees;
 - 19 responding districts categorize school nurses as classified employees, either grouping them with support staff such as bus drivers and maintenance staff or with administrative support positions;
 - 28 responding districts do not categorize school nurses as certified or classified and instead use a salary schedule specific to school nurses.

- In 2018-19, about 65 percent of school nurses held at least a registered license while 35 percent were licensed practical nurses.
- Approximately 52 percent of responding districts group school nurses with classified employees or on a nurses-only salary schedule. For most of these nurses a change to a certified salary schedule would result in a pay increase.
- The comparison found that the cost to increase pay for nurses employed in three sample districts ranged from \$3,141 to \$17,374 per nurse.
- The proposed legislation will require some LEAs to increase compensation for some nurses, while other LEAs may already be meeting the requirement.
- The precise number of nurses not currently meeting the requirement and the amount required to meet such requirement outlined in the legislation is unknown. Further, some LEAs not currently meeting the compensation requirement for nurses may shift funding or may increase funding in order to meet the requirements.
- Due to multiple unknown variables, the precise increase in mandatory local government expenditures cannot be reasonably determined.
- No impact to DOE.

**Article II, Section 24 of the Tennessee Constitution provides that: no law of general application shall impose increased expenditure requirements on cities or counties unless the General Assembly shall provide that the state share in the cost.*

CERTIFICATION:

The information contained herein is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.



Krista Lee Carsner, Executive Director

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